



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

***Everglades and  
Dry Tortugas  
National Parks***

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## Everglades News Release – UPDATE

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

For Immediate Release

**Date:** February 12, 2014

**Contacts:** General Park Information: 305-242-7700

Dan Kimball, Superintendent, 305-242-7710

Brien Culhane, Chief, Planning and Compliance 305-242-7717

Media contacts only: Linda Friar, 305-242-7714, or Mary Plumb, 305-242-7017

***February 12, 2014 - UPDATE - Additional Information is Provided Below on the Public Meeting Announced in a Park News Release Issued January 17*** (Everglades National Park Seeks Public Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Acquisition of Florida Power and Light Company Land in the East Everglades Expansion Area)

*Homestead:* Everglades National Park is hosting a public meeting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Acquisition of Florida Power and Light Company Land in the East Everglades Expansion Area.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 19 (5:30 to 8:30 p.m.). The public program will inform participants about the purpose and need for federal action, proposed alternatives, issues, and the decision-making process. Below is additional information about the meeting agenda and parking logistics for February 19.

### **Meeting Agenda:**

5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Open House: opportunities for the public to review Draft EIS materials, meet and have discussions with NPS staff, and provide comments on the proposed document.

6:30 - 7:15 p.m. NPS Presentation: Welcome by Superintendent Dan Kimball; then Brien Culhane, Chief of Planning and Compliance, will provide an overview of key features of the Draft EIS.

7:15 - 8:30 p.m. Public Hearing: a recorded public comment session that allows the public to provide formal comments on the Draft EIS.

**Location:** Florida International University (FIU) - Stadium Club, 11310 Southwest 17th Street, Miami Florida, 33199

**Directions:** The Stadium Club is located in the football stadium at FIU. Follow the Florida Turnpike to the Tamiami Trail (SW 8th Street) exit. Take the SW 8th Street EAST exit. Turn

RIGHT on SW 117th Avenue. Turn LEFT on SW 17th Street. Turn RIGHT on SW 114 Court. Free parking is located to the LEFT on the south side of the stadium. The Stadium Club is located between Gates 2 and 3 on the south side of the stadium.

Please see attached map and directions, for your convenience.

-----**Release Issued January 17, 2014**-----

**Date:** January 17, 2014

**Contacts:** General Park Information: 305-242-7700

Dan Kimball, Superintendent, 305-242-7710

Brien Culhane, Chief, Planning and Compliance 305-242-7717

Media contacts only: Linda Friar, 305-242-7714, or Mary Plumb, 305-242-7017

## **Everglades National Park Seeks Public Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Acquisition of Florida Power and Light Company Land in East Everglades Expansion Area**

Everglades National Park is seeking public comment on its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Acquisition of Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) Land in the East Everglades Expansion Area (EEEA). The Draft EIS was released January 17 for public review, and public comment is requested by Tuesday, March 18, 2014.

The Draft EIS is available for review and comment at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/EVER> (then go to the "Open for Comment" link). A limited number of paper copies and compact disks (CDs) of the plan are also available upon request by contacting Everglades National Park at 305-242-7700.

A public meeting is scheduled to receive comments on the Draft EIS:

**Date:** February 19, 2014

**Location:** Florida International University (FIU) - Stadium Club

11310 Southwest 17th Street, Miami Florida, 33199

The Stadium Club is located within the FIU Football Stadium between gates 2 and 3.

**Time:** 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The public meeting will inform participants about the purpose and need for federal action, proposed alternatives, issues, and the decision-making process. It will include a presentation and displays about the proposed action and the EIS process and provide for comments to be recorded in a public hearing format. NPS and project staff will be there to answer questions and listen to comments.

National Park Service (NPS) acquisition of the FPL property, or a flowage easement on the property, is needed to support the mission of the park and is vital to long-term protection of the park for ecosystem restoration purposes. The FPL property (a 320 acre, 7.4 mile corridor in the EEEA) is needed to support the goals of restoring the Northeast

Shark River Slough and to fulfill the purposes of the Modified Water Deliveries project and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Public Law (PL) 101-229 (December 13, 1989) articulates that the Everglades is both nationally and internationally significant and sets forth specific goals and objectives for acquisition of properties in this area. Acquisition of FPL's property through an exchange of lands with NPS is also authorized by Public Law 111-11 (March 2009).

In June 2011, the NPS conducted scoping to obtain public input on the alternatives to be considered and issues to be addressed in the Draft EIS. After considering more than 39,000 comments from the public, the NPS evaluated a number of acquisition alternatives. The Draft EIS addresses both the potential impacts from the acquisition of FPL land in the EEEA, as well as the indirect impacts that could result from the subsequent construction and operation of transmission lines that could be built by FPL either inside or outside the park as a result of the land acquisition alternative selected.

- Under **alternative 1a**, the No-Action Alternative, the NPS would not take action to acquire FPL property within the park or a flowage easement on it. There would be no change in status of the FPL lands in the park, and this alternative assumes that FPL would not construct transmission lines. This is the alternative that all other alternatives are compared to in the EIS impact analysis.
- Under **alternative 1b**, the NPS would not take action to acquire FPL property within the park or a flowage easement on it. Although it represents the same land acquisition option as alternative 1a, this alternative assumes that FPL would construct transmission lines on its existing land in the park.
- Under **alternative 2**, the FPL corridor would be acquired directly by purchase or through the exercise of eminent domain authority by the United States. This alternative assumes that FPL would likely acquire a replacement corridor east of the existing park boundary and the transmission lines would be built outside of the park.
- Under **alternative 3 or 4**, the NPS would acquire fee title to the 320 acre FPL corridor through an exchange for park property (alternative 3) or an easement on that property (alternative 4). The exchange corridor would consist of 260 acres along 6.5 miles of the eastern boundary of the EEEA. Under alternative 3, the boundary of the park would be adjusted to remove the lands conveyed to FPL out of federal ownership. Under Alternative 4, the NPS would retain ownership of the 260 acre corridor and grant a utility easement to FPL. The construction scenario associated with these alternatives assumes that FPL would build the transmission lines in the exchange corridor and meet the terms and conditions agreed to in the exchange.
- Under **alternative 5**, the NPS would acquire a perpetual flowage easement on FPL's property within the EEEA through purchase, condemnation, or donation by FPL. FPL would retain ownership of its corridor in the park during the term of the easement and could seek permits to construct transmission lines there. The construction scenario associated with this alternative would be the same as for alternative 1b.

The Draft EIS does not identify a preferred alternative and the NPS wants to obtain public input on the alternatives under consideration to help inform this important

decision. A preferred alternative will be identified and announced in the Final EIS scheduled for completion in the autumn of 2014.

**How to Comment:** The NPS request that comments be submitted by March 18, 2014. Comments may be given verbally or in writing at the public meeting, or online through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment site at the following link <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/EVER> . Comments may also be submitted via mail to: Everglades National Park FPL Project Planning Team, Attn: Morgan Elmer (DSC-P), P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287; or by hand delivery to Park headquarters, at 40001 State Road 9336, Homestead, FL 33034-6733.

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*This and other park releases are available at [www.nps.gov/ever/parknews/newsreleases](http://www.nps.gov/ever/parknews/newsreleases).*

More information on Everglades National Park can be found on the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/ever>

NPS

*About the National Park Service: More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).*